

Soundtrack

by SgtMac

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Summary: Thanks to the weekly ritual that is Sunday Bath-Day, Emma learns that Regina's typically turbulent moods and emotions as well as the nature of their always-evolving relationship can often be tracked by what kind of music Regina is listening to as she bathes. Established Swan Queen.

Soundtrack

Regina likes her baths.

Warm and bubbly and full of soft smells.

Every Sunday, when the house is quiet and lazy and void of the usual insanity that is their lives, she retreats to the bathroom, turns on the iPod docked just above the tub, and sinks into the water with a contented sigh, a paperback true crime novel in her hands.

It's her ritual and the only thing that changes is the music.

* * *

><p>Emma sleeps over on a Saturday night (she's been tending to do that a lot as of late, and one of these days, they'll probably need to talk about just how much she's here at the mansion instead of at her own apartment), though honestly there hadn't really been much sleeping the evening before.<p>

She's tired and sore and she thinks there's an aching bite-mark on her right hip, but she's feeling so insanely good and stupidly obscenely happy despite all of those things that she thinks that if she was someone that was into the whole spontaneous singing out loud thing, well she just might do it.

Instead, with a lazy yawn that best resembles the indulgent sound

that a cat makes, she rolls over in the massive bed, the sheets clutched to her naked chest, and gazes up at the ceiling. Her eyes closing, she listens to the sound of music coming from the bathroom, trying to catch enough of it to identify what the genre is for today. She'd felt Regina rise from the mattress not long ago, and then there had been the sound of water being drawn and Emma had reminded herself of the day of the week.

Sunday.

Bath day.

One of these days, Emma thinks as she curls into the thick blankets, she's going to score herself an invitation to this. One of these days, she's going to find out what the draw of it is for Regina (Emma's never been much for baths herself, rarely having the time for such and having largely seen such frivolous acts as the luxuries of those who wellâ€|are allowed such luxuries).

But one of these days, she tells herself, she'll find a way to understand.

For now, though, she just listens to the now recognizable deeply soothing sounds of Patsy Cline and Lou Reed as they come floating through the closed bathroom door. The music pushes her back towards the fuzzy velvet in her mind, back towards the warmth of cozy restful sleep. She sees no reason to fight against the comfort and safety, and so with a smile, she falls into a morning nap.

As Patsy sings _"Never No More"_, she thinks maybe she'll take an afternoon one later, too.

* * *

><p>It's not always Lou and Patsy serenading Regina while she's soaking.<p>

Sometimes it's Janice Joplin or sometimes it's Cat Stevens.

Regina has a particular love for _"Where Do The Children Play?"_ and whenever Emma hears it coming through the door, Emma finds herself trying to pull the words apart, trying to understand what they mean to Regina. Or maybe they're just simply lyrics and she looks the poetry of them.

She always ends up chuckling and reminding herself that they're just songs and they probably don't mean anything at allâ€|but she knows better; this is Regina and everything means something.

In any case, today, it's the haunting vocals of Jim Morrison that are filling the room and echoing lightly off the walls in time with the rolling thunderstorm, and Emma never would have expected that.

But she's listening as his voice wails through the door, and haunting seems so very accurate when it comes to describing and defining his nature, and well, she supposes that explains the allure of it, then. The musical rift in the middle soars and explodes and it reminds her a bit of Regina as sheâ€| crests. It reminds her of just how insanely powerful and just barely restrained Regina can be at times.

She hears a splash of water a few moments later and then the door is opening and Regina is emerging from the bathroom with nearly glowing freshly scrubbed skin and a soft delicate smile on her pink lips. When she sees Emma watching her, a blush hits the Queen's cheeks because even now, she's not used to being seen this way. Almost happy and at ease, the world not biting away at her heels.

"Hi," Emma grins, waggling her eyebrows suggestively. "You maybe want to get dirty again?"

It's possibly the worst pick-up line ever put out into the world, even for a woman who is already in a committed relationship. But Regina is laughing because it's so ridiculous and Emma is grinning and then the bathrobe is hitting the floor and yeah, there might need to be another long bath later.

* * *

><p>It's raining cats and dogs outside and Emma is curled beneath a stack of thick cozy blankets, her eyes half-closed, listening as thunder crackles in the distance and Emeli Sande slides out from under the closed bathroom door. There's a kind of desperation to woman's voice, a pleading need that seems both beautiful and tragic, and it's then as Emma is watching the shadows play across the ceiling that she realizes just how many of the artists Regina listens to seem to be as haunted as Regina is.<p>

When the door opens up a short time later, Regina seems quiet and melancholy even though her body is almost like liquid as she slides back beneath the blankets and then into Emma's open arms, turning to face her, her eyes immediately seeking out Emma's like she desperately need to see and understand what Emma sees in her. She doesn't actually vocalize these thoughts; she doesn't open up and let her demons out to dance and play. That will never be Regina's way - she's spent too long locking those frightening things away - but she accepts the safe arms that come around her and the the face that nuzzles into her neck.

She accepts the kisses on her neck and jaw and eyelids.

She doesn't pull away, just lets her shadows fall to the side.

It occurs to the sheriff, then, as she's closing her eyes and pulling Regina even closer to her, that the music is still playing even though the bath is long over.

Emma doesn't say anything, doesn't mention it, just pulls the blankets over the top of them, pulls them down into the middle of it and closes her eyes and embraces the warmth of€|them.

* * *

><p>There are furious days, too, and on those ones, some seriously pissed off angry chick rock tends to provide the soundtrack for these volatile mornings. They come after fights or after nightmares - usually after nightmares when she won't talk, which leads to the fights - and then there are doors slamming and the wailing voice of the ladies with the great voices and ability to infuse so much rage.<p>

The first time this happens, Emma angrily leaves the house, the door crashing shut behind her as she struggles with the pain and fears that make up the messiness of her turbulent emotions.

It's a mistake and it causes almost a week of painful heartbreaking separation.

It's fear, hurt and abandonment and it all comes out in another loud screaming fight and then Regina is quietly telling her that this is what she's always been afraid of. She says that she has always known that there would come a time when she would be too much. She asks, "Is that now?"

Emma shakes her head "frantically, urgently.

Because no, that's not at all what she'd been trying to do; it's most certainly not what Emma had meant to do when she had stormed out of the house. She'd been the one feeling rejected and pushed away by her lover, and she tells Regina this softly, his face screwed up into so much agonizing "lost girl" pain. She says that she'd taken the slamming doors and screaming voices for a sign of things.

A sign that she hadn't been wanted.

The anger between them rapidly falls away at that and then Regina is clutching her, her fingers digging hard into Emma's shoulders and then those same fingers are pressing lightly against the blonde's cheeks as the older woman whispers, "You are always wanted, my love; always, always, always."

Their foreheads meet and then they're both just sighing, their arms wrapping around each other, grounding each other as they always have.

And then they start laughing because truly, only they could make such a mess of this.

* * *

><p>Regina likes a bit of modern country as well, not the twang kind but the more rock type with the bombastic vocals and the simplicity of "cowboy love". Initially, Emma doesn't understand because it seems in direct contrast to the more haunting and emotional vocals that seem to own the rest of the iPod, but then she realizes that it's the younger side of Regina - the little girl that has spent so much time buried beneath pain and darkness - that finds itself drawn to tight-jeaned men and fresh-faced plaid wearing women who sing of first loves with cornflower blue eyes and sweet easy smiles.<p>

The lazy Sundays Regina spends listening to this kind of music are the ones which feel the calmest and the most peaceful to the often exhausted Sheriff. These are the ones where Emma thinks that Regina is actually allowing herself to believe the words that they whisper to each other as their bodies are cooling and hands are clutching. These are the moments when Emma finds herself really believing.

Really thinking that time could fly away from them "that days and months and even years could pass in the blink of an eye - and they might still be able to find themselves standing next to each

other.

When Regina returns to the bedroom after these days, her mood is always good and she's usually up for something that feels almost normal " something that feels like they're just an ordinary normal everyday couple. These are the days that usually involve afternoon picnics and time at the park.

These are the days where it's the easiest to forget who they are and where they've been. These moments don't always feel real because they'll well aware that they'll always be their pasts, but they're a nice escape from the haunting melodies and desperate vocals that make up the rest of their lives.

* * *

><p>Regina tends to listen to classical music when her mind is running too fast and she doesn't have space in that constantly whirling brain of hers for lyrics or thoughts. When she's trying to work out a problem and her lips are curled into a frown, only the soaring instrumentals will do and these are the afternoons when romance is forgotten between them because far too often, when there are pianos, they are the Savior and the Queen and this town needs them to figure out how to save the day.<p>

Emma wants to hate these days, she wants to hate the duty that compels them, and their fates, but then these are the things that have brought them together and it's the whole package or none.

So Emma listens and sighs and readies herself for battle.

* * *

><p>It's something in Italian the first time she gets asked to join Regina, the first time her lover - the mercurial and temperamental Queen holds out her hand and seductively says, "Will you join me?"<p>

Emma almost thinks she'd heard wrong, and then she has to practically fall over herself to reassure a now slightly rejected feeling Regina that yes, she wants to. She really really wants to.

The water is warm and apple scented (of course) and the bubbles have the lightest tint of reddish color to them as Regina pulls her down into them, sitting behind Emma and kissing her neck as she brings the younger woman against her wet skin. The music is deep and romantic and Emma doesn't have a clue what's being said, but even if she did, the fact that Regina is holding her so close and sharing this moment would always matter more. The song, whatever it is, seems turbulent and passionate and that feels right for both them and this moment and then she's moaning.

And whispering and feeling Regina bite her ear as the Queen quietly speaks words that don't come easy to her lips even if they come easy to her heart. "Thank you for saying yes," Regina murmurs, her tongue warm as it loops around Emma's earlobe, only to be chased by a snap of teeth a second later (Regina is a biter, oh yes she is). "Thank you for doing this with me. For being here with me."

It's an absurd statement as far as Emma is concerned so she rushes to

try to reassure Regina that this is both a pleasure and a honor for her. "Thank you for" the words catch in her throat, and then Emma is moaning again as hands drift beneath the bubbles and the guy who is singing gets intense.

She hears Regina chuckle, entirely too pleased with herself.

And Emma thinks maybe she should learn Italian.

Yeah, because this guy currently belting out his lyrics? He's got the right idea.

Then she stops thinking, and just sinks backwards into bliss.

Smelling apples the whole damn way.

* * *

><p>Regina likes her baths.<p>

Every Sunday.

She doesn't always invite Emma in to join her, and Emma has learned not to be offended by the lack of an invite. Some days, Regina needs the warm solitude of the bubbles. And some days, she needs the crashing opera or the romantic country or the angry rock that lets her seethe.

Some days, she needs to just be able to feel without worrying that she is.

On the better afternoons, though, it's not just Italian or even those playful Spanish songs that get Emma invites on the days when Regina wants to share these moments - this part of her - with Emma. Sometimes, it's rock and roll and Emma finds herself laughing because she can just picture Regina's surprise the first time she'd heard Elvis Presley and sometimes it's a song that Henry's listening to that she likes more than she will ever admit to their now moody broody sulky and sullen teenager..

Most of the time, Emma notes, the music that fills the bathroom and the bedroom on Sundays still has a tragically haunting edge to it, a kind of dangerous lilt and turn that is often so full of complicated emotions that Emma almost want to scream her way through the frustration of it all.

But that's familiar

It's a lot like Regina, Emma muses as she opens the blankets and pulls Regina beneath her, her arms circling around her lovers' torso as a gust of Winter air breaks through the open windows.

Yeah, it's a whole lot like them both.

And somewhere behind them, Pink Floyd " the music of deep thought " plays on.

**-Fin**

End
file.